



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Human Sciences

Center *for* Early Head Start™

## **Policies and Procedures Parent Handbook**

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Your name

*“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account balance was,  
the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of clothes I wore. But the world may be very  
different if I was important in the life of the child.”*

-Unknown

**TTU Center for Early Head Start  
Parent Handbook**

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## **Part 1 – Welcome to our Program!**

Welcome to the TTU Center for Early Head Start program.  
We are glad to have you with us.

Early Head Start is about children and families. You are the ones who give Early Head Start its meaning.  
Thank you for being part of our Head Start Family!

## **Part 2 – What is Early Head Start?**

### **What is the mission?**

The mission of Texas Tech University Center for Early Head Start is to:

- promote School Readiness by nurturing the physical, emotional, social, language, and cognitive development of infants and toddlers
  - develop and strengthen families' abilities as primary educators of their children
  - serve as advocates for our children and their families
- in a program that is supported by and supportive of state-of-the-art research.

### **What is the TTU Center for Early Head Start Philosophy?**

Texas Tech University Center for Early Head Start believes that children reach their highest potential in an atmosphere of caring and respect that offers many opportunities to learn in ways that meet the needs of each individual child.

### **What are the program's goals?**

TTU Center for Early Head Start has developed School Readiness goals for children based on the following domains:

- Language and Literacy
- Cognition and General Knowledge
- Approaches to Learning
- Physical Development and Health
- Social-Emotional Development

In addition, the program intends to improve family outcomes based on the Parent, Family, and, Community Engagement Framework developed by the Office of Head Start.

- Family Well Being
- Parent Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families Becoming Advocates and Leaders

As we focus on these areas, it is our hope that children will have improved School Readiness skills and families will benefit as a result of participating in the program.

### **Why a Parent Handbook?**

The Parent Handbook is written for the families of the children in Early Head Start to give you a better understanding of the CEHS program and to help us work together for your children. All of the parent policies are subject to change, pending approval by Policy Council. Parents will be informed in writing of any changes to TTU CEHS Policy.

### **What is the curriculum?**

Early Head Start uses the *High/Scope* curriculum for infants and toddlers. Children are involved in active learning to help them develop physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Each week your child has the opportunity for a variety of experiences, such as:

- time alone and time with others
- quiet and active play, both inside and outside
- exploring blocks, pretend play, art, discovery, simple problem-solving, games, music, cooking, stories and book sharing, nature walks, and buggy rides.

## **What are the standards for TTU Center for Early Head Start?**

CEHS follows the standards set by:

- State of Texas Child Care Licensing
- Office of Head Start (OHS)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Texas Tech University
- StarCare Specialty, Inc.
- Texas Rising Star

## **What is Texas Rising Star?**

Texas Rising Star (TRS) is a quality rating and improvement system for Texas early childhood programs.

## **What other services does Early Head Start provide?**

### **Developmental Screenings**

During the first 45 days of enrollment, each child receives screenings with parent consent. These screenings check skills in 4 areas: vision, hearing, social-emotional, and overall development. In addition, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social / Emotional (ASQ:SE) may be used throughout the year, using your feedback as well as teacher observations. Teachers and home visitors are trained to conduct these screenings and use the information to meet your child's needs and support their development.

### **Developmental Assessment**

Teachers and home visitors will conduct ongoing assessments of your child's development using the Child Observation Record (COR). This assessment is done in the regular classroom or during home visits, while your child participates in their daily activities. You will be asked to participate in the assessment process by providing information about your child to CEHS staff and assessment results will be shared with you at least 3 times each year. Teachers and home visitors are trained to conduct these assessments and use the information to meet your child's needs and support their development. Your child's assessment is kept confidential and is shared with you and TTU CEHS staff as needed.

### **Nutritional Information**

A nutrition assessment is completed on each child during enrollment, with parental consent. Any concerns that arise from the assessment are addressed with the family and resources are shared as appropriate. Parents are also helped with questions about feeding their families, and provided information on how to prepare economical and nutritious meals as a means to better health.

### **Mental Health Information**

The Social Emotional Wellness Specialist is available to provide support for good parenting and family relations, through observation and play with children at the center and visiting families in their homes.

### **Social Service, Education, and Health Information**

TTU CEHS has on staff a Family and Health Manager available at any time to assist families with social services, and to provide information about health concerns or issues. The Education Manager is also available to assist families with child development concerns, as well as help staff with training and higher education needs.

### **Family Engagement**

Families are provided the opportunity to enhance their parenting and life skills. They are also given the opportunity to participate in a goal setting process that will help the entire family develop positive outcomes.

### **Research Projects**

CEHS participates in research projects that may involve observation of children or participation in their normal play activities. Families may be asked to participate by taking part in surveys or interviews. All research projects have the approval of the administrative staff and the consent of parents before they or their children participate.

### **College of Human Sciences**

CEHS partners with the college of Human Sciences to provide a learning experience for college students enrolled in Human Development and Family Studies courses. These students undergo a required background check, and are supervised by the classroom teacher.

### **Will you keep my information confidential?**

Those of us who have chosen to work with children follow an important code of ethics that guides our work. It is essential that we protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Information may be shared with the classroom teachers, CEHS Managers, parents/guardians, as well as other agencies or individuals, as appropriate. For more information regarding sharing of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), refer to the General Consent Form. We also ask that CEHS families do not discuss other participants.

### **Who works at Early Head Start?**

#### Management Staff

Denise Stovall, Program Director  
Andrea Bewley, Family and Health Manager  
Sherry Alheyari, Fiscal and ERSEA Manager  
Rachel Johnston, Education Manager

#### Program Staff

Teachers  
Home Visitors  
Program Support Specialist  
Program Quality Specialist  
Classroom Assistants  
Kitchen staff\*  
Social Emotional Wellness Specialist\*

#### Volunteers

SPC/TTU Practicum students\*  
HDFS Lab students\*  
Long term volunteers who are regularly scheduled\*  
Therapy/Medical providers (ECI, nurse, etc.) \*

\*do not count towards ratio and cannot be left alone with children

## Part 3 – Attending the Early Head Start Center

### Who can attend?

The Center-Based program is for 72 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 3 years of age whose families:

- live in the city of Lubbock
- meet the income eligibility and enrollment priority requirements.

### Are there costs for parents?

There are no fees for children and families to participate in TTU Center for Early Head Start during the regular HS day 7:30-2:30.

There will be fees charged for wrap-around care and late fees charged for late pick up.

### How does my child begin?

It is important for your child to have a smooth transition from home to CEHS. You and your child's teacher will plan for the transition so that your child can be as comfortable as possible each step of the way. Your plan could include a home visit, a center tour, or visiting the classroom. Children entering the center-based program will be assigned to either an **infant** (6 weeks-18 months) or a **toddler** (18 months-3 years) classroom. For continuity of care, the child will remain in this classroom until they transition to the older age room, or to another program once they turn three years old. Enrollment records, such as licensing admission form and CACFP enrollment form are completed by the parent/guardian and renewed annually. CEHS will provide translation to all non-English speaking parents when requested.

### What is the schedule?

CEHS is usually open Monday through Friday, 12 months a year, from 7:30 am - 2:30 pm. The program follows the TTU staff calendar for **holidays and vacation**. A yearly calendar will be given to you upon enrollment so that you may make appropriate plans when CEHS will be closed for the day or will close early. For flooding, severe weather, or emergency closing, please refer to local news stations and our Facebook and Instagram pages.

### What if I need care after 2:30 pm?

Wrap-around care is available for families who qualify for Child Care Services assistance and need child care after the CEHS day ends. CCS will determine your parent fee for this service. Wrap-around care ends no later than 5:30 pm.

If you do not qualify for Child Care Services, you have the option to pay for wrap-around care for a weekly fee. The weekly fee is determined by CCS current reimbursement rates. Families must enroll for specific days each week and will be responsible for payment, whether the child is present or absent. Children with unpaid fees will not be eligible for wrap-around care and are expected to be picked up by 2:30 pm.

**All fees will be due on Friday, before the week of care.** A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged after 5:30 pm, and must be paid before the child can attend wrap-around care again.

### How do I drop off my child?

The Early Head Start day begins at 8:00 am. CEHS allows 30 minutes of travel time; therefore you may bring your child as early as 7:30 am. **No children will be received before 7:30 am.** Children are expected to be dropped off no later than 8:30 am. If there is an emergency or your child has an

appointment, and you must bring your child after 8:30 am, call the center as early as possible to let your child's teacher know. **Children must arrive by 10:00 am.**

When you drop off your child:

- do not leave your vehicle idling in parking areas
- do not leave young children alone in your car
- refrain from using your cell phone while dropping off your child
- sign in to your child's classroom and answer questions about your child
- check your child's cubby
- be sure that an adult knows your child is present before you leave
- do not leave your child if there is no adult present in the classroom.

**Note:** Each time you are late dropping off your child, you will be asked to sign the tardy log. Chronic tardiness will be addressed with your family.

### **How should I say goodbye to my child?**

CEHS recognizes that it is sometimes hard for parents and children to separate, especially if it is for the first time. Please say goodbye but do not prolong it, and do not sneak out of the classroom. The teachers are competent to handle unhappy children. Allow your child a reasonable adjustment period. If difficulties persist, be sure to talk with the teacher.

### **What will my child eat?**

CEHS prepares and serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, according to the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Your child is automatically eligible for free meals in the CACFP because they are enrolled in this Early Head Start Program. Upon enrollment and annually thereafter, families will be asked to complete an enrollment form for the CACFP program, and be given "Building for the Future" and an updated WIC flyer. During mealtimes, the staff sits with children to talk with them and model correct behaviors. The Civil Rights of children must be maintained during meal service. This means there can be no discriminatory behavior based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Menus are created by the CEHS Cook and approved by a Registered Dietician to ensure the children receive nutritious meals every day. Copies are made available to the parents and are posted outside of each classroom. Additional food policies:

- second servings will be made available in the vegetable, fruit, grain, milk groups
- water is served at every meal and after active play, and is available at all times
- children must be allowed to feed themselves according to their developmental level
- staff wear gloves while serving group meals
- staff record meals at the time of service for CACFP purposes
- foods are discarded after the expiration date
- classrooms may not microwave children's food or beverages
- kitchen staff must use glass containers to heat children's food or beverages in the microwave
- liquids and foods that reach 110 degrees are kept out of children's reach
- hotdogs are cut lengthwise and quartered
- CEHS does not serve foods that are choking hazards such as whole grapes, popcorn, raw peas or pretzels
- CEHS does not serve peanuts or peanut butter; if your child has a diagnosed peanut allergy, please notify your child's teacher immediately
- toddlers must sit at the table to drink from a cup (may not walk around either inside or outside)
- fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed before being served to children



- CEHS serves only 100% fruit juice and only to children over 1 year of age
- cow's milk is not offered to infants under 1 year of age
- follow all manufacturer's instructions for safely storing and disposing of food or drink products such as yogurt, soy-milk, almond-milk, oat-milk, pea-milk, lactaid, or pediasure
- infants are held at all times when taking a bottle; bottles are never propped and children cannot sleep with a bottle
- formula must be discarded one hour after the infant begins feeding
- breastmilk must be discarded two hours after the infant finishes feeding
- bottle feedings do not contain solid foods or cereal
- bottles are warmed using bottle warmers if needed, never in the microwave

**Note:** If a child has any allergies or special dietary needs, CEHS must have a completed Allergy Emergency Plan signed by you and your child's health care professional, or detailed written instructions about any special dietary needs.

TTU CEHS supports mothers who choose to breastfeed by providing them a comfortable and private place to breastfeed their child. If mothers bring milk into the classrooms, we will coordinate storing and serving the milk. Breastmilk must be labeled with the child's name and the date it was made. We can store frozen milk up to 3 months, and refrigerated milk can be stored up to 48 hours.

**When will my child eat?**

The program provides nutritious, age-appropriate foods daily; infants are fed on demand, and toddlers are served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack at the following times:

Breakfast	8:15 am
Lunch	11:15 am
PM Snack	1:45 pm

**Note:** Children arriving after breakfast is over will be offered an alternative. No outside food is allowed in the classrooms (if it is brought in, it will be thrown away, or parents will be asked to sit with their child and finish the breakfast in the library.)

**How do I pick up my child?**

Departure for children is at 2:00 pm, and CEHS allows 30 minutes for travel time, so all children must be picked up by 2:30 pm. Children enrolled in wrap-around care must be picked up no later than 5:30 pm. When picking up your child:

- do not leave your vehicle idling in parking areas
- do not leave young children alone in your car
- sign them out of the classroom
- be sure that a staff person knows your child is leaving
- check your child's cubby and take the items home with you.

**Note:** Chronic tardiness will be addressed with your family and an attendance plan will be made. After the attendance plan is made, you will be expected to be on time every day. If your child is not picked up by 2:30 pm, they will be placed in the wrap-around classroom, and a fee of \$1 per minute will be charged. That fee must be paid within one day.

Children can only be released to parents/guardians and persons listed on the Authorization to Release form. Under no circumstances can a child be released to anyone not authorized by the parent. In cases of separation, divorce, or other custody disputes, we cannot limit one biological parent's right to see or pick up the child. A parent's rights will only be limited if we have been provided a copy of any

court action stating those limitations or custody arrangements. For one parent to simply leave off the name of another parent on the child's Authorization to Release form will not limit that parent's rights.

### **What if I am running late for pick up?**

If you cannot pick up your child by 2:30 pm, contact the center to let them know you will be late and when you plan to arrive. Your child will be cared for by staff in one of the classrooms until you arrive.

**If a child has not been picked up by 3:00 pm** for the Early Head Start day, **or 6:00 pm** for wrap-around care **and Early Head Start has not been contacted**, CEHS staff will contact Child Protective Services and/or Lubbock Police Department.

### **What happens if I cannot pick up my child?**

If you cannot pick up your child, contact one of the people you have listed (designated) on the Authorization to Release form to pick up your child. When the designated person arrives, the CEHS staff will follow these procedures for the safety of your child:

- check to see that the person picking up your child is listed on your Authorization to Release form
- if the person picking up your child is not already designated, you must provide us with the person's name and they will be added to your Authorization to Release
- make a copy of the person's driver's license OR picture ID
- have the person sign your child out, including the date and time your child is released.

Please tell any person you designate about these safety procedures, so that they are not surprised or offended in any way.

**IF CEHS STAFF SUSPECTS THAT A DESIGNATED PICK UP PERSON IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO NOTIFY AUTHORITIES.**

### **Does my child need to come every day?**

Your child does need to attend TTU Center for Early Head Start every day. According to EHS regulations, children must attend 85% of the time (typically 3 or fewer absences each month) in order for TTU CEHS to continue receiving funding for the program.

TTU CEHS strongly believes that children's feelings of security, trust, and safety are affected by regular attendance and that children thrive when they can control their environment by knowing what to expect each day. Regular routines are a very important parenting tool that will be most effective when started at this early age.

Research shows that children who attend school at least 90% of the time have significantly better development in social-emotional skills, language skills, and cognition. Children who regularly attend an Early Head Start program are better prepared when they enter Kindergarten than their peers who do not attend EHS. TTU CEHS wishes to help families achieve a 90% rate of attendance for their child. You will be informed on a monthly basis if your child's attendance falls below 90%.

If your child's attendance falls below 85% for any month, you may be asked to meet with the Family and Health Manager to support your child's regular attendance.

If your child is below 85% for 3 months in a row, your child's spot in the CEHS program could be lost.

### **Absences with notification: (excused absences)**

If your child must be absent for the day due to illness, professional appointment, or other legitimate reason, you must call the center **BEFORE 8:30 am** in order to excuse your child. Please call the center and ask to speak to your child's classroom to give the following information:

- your name
- your child's name
- the reason for the absence
- how long your child must be absent.

**Absences without notification: (unexcused absences)**

If your child is absent from the center for any reason and you do not contact the center **BEFORE 8:30 am**, your child is considered unexcused. CEHS is required to attempt to contact you by 9:30 a.m. if we have not heard from you. On the third day with no contact, a home visit will be attempted by the teacher and a member of management. If no contact is made at your home, a letter will be mailed to your home asking you to contact the center within 7 days. If there is no contact by the indicated date, the child will be dropped from the program.

**If your child has 3 unexcused absence in a row, OR**

**If your child has 5 unexcused absence within one month,**

then you will be asked to meet with a CEHS staff member to discuss your child's continued participation in the CEHS program. As a result of this conference, the decision may be to continue or withdraw your child from the CEHS program.

**Exclusionary Rule:**

At no time will a documented illness or hospitalization cause your child to lose their spot in the CEHS program.

**Will my child take a nap?**

Each child is provided the opportunity to sleep or rest after lunch for not less than 1 hour, but no more than 3 hours. Infants younger than 12 months who are not walking will sleep in individual cribs with a sheet only. Walking children or children over 12 months will sleep on a cot. Each child's bedding is not shared and is laundered regularly. If children wake before naptime is over, they will be provided with quiet activities to allow other children to continue sleeping. Children are always supervised by staff during naptime and adequate lighting is provided for constant visual supervision. Young infants are allowed to maintain their own pattern of sleep. Swaddled infants may not be laid down to sleep, unless a sleep exception form has been signed by the child's doctor. Infants may never sleep in a restrictive device, such as car seat, swing, or bouncer. Other modifications to sleep needs such as a wedge or pillow must have a signed doctor's statement.

**Will my child go outside?**

Your child will have outdoor experiences **every day**, weather permitting. When weather does not permit going outside according to Child Care Weather Watch, children are given the opportunity to use the indoor gym for active play.

**Will my child play in water outdoors?**

The center occasionally has water play days on the playground. Water play is limited to sprinklers placed in the grass, and water tables containing 3 inches of water or less. You may be asked to bring a swimsuit for your child on those days.

**How should my child dress?**

*Clothes*

Your child should be dressed and ready to start the day when they arrive at CEHS. Your child needs to wear **simple, comfortable, washable** clothes each day. Children will be participating in activities that cause them to get dirty, so please do not send children in good clothes. Your child also needs *extra clothes*. Please bring:

- 2 extra outfits in case of messy play or accidents
- an extra pair of shoes
- a jacket during cold weather, as well as hat and mittens if you wish for your child to wear them  
(Remember: we go outside every day.)

Each piece of clothing must be clearly labeled with your child's name. You may label the items, or the teacher can mark your items for you with permanent marker.

**Note:** If your child's clothes become dirty, the teacher may clean them in the washing machine. Please **do not** bring anything that you would not want run through the washer and dryer.

#### *Shoes*

Shoes need to be worn every day, preferably sneakers for safety. Please **NO** flip-flops, boots, or bare feet. Once your child begins to walk, they are **required** to wear shoes daily.

### **What can my child bring?**

CEHS provides all of the learning materials for each child, as well as diapers, wipes, blankets, formula, and food. To protect your personal items, CEHS encourages you to leave toys and games at home or in the car. If items are brought in, they will be placed in the child's cubby until the end of the day. CEHS is not responsible for any lost, broken, or stolen items.

Items to be left at home include **toys, dolls, stuffed animals, action figures, jewelry, toy guns, sleeping bags, large comforters, full-size pillows, candy, gum, and money. Electronics such as tablets, phones, ipods, and personal computers should also be left at home. CEHS does not use screen time for any daily activity.**

Remember, no outside food is allowed in the center, except for food intended to be shared by the whole class or center, which must be commercially prepared and contain an ingredient list. Avoid foods with peanuts, peanut butter, or that could be choking hazards. If personal snacks are brought in, they will be thrown away.

### **Can I sell things?**

To be fair to each parent and each staff member, CEHS does not participate in **buying from or selling to** anyone in the program, or to any person at the CEHS center. This includes candles, candy, gift wrap, home decorations, make-up, or any other person-to-person sales.

### **Can I celebrate my child's birthday?**

Your child's birthday is important to us and we want to help celebrate it. Talk with your child's teacher at least 1 week before the birthday if you would like to celebrate at school. Things to consider:

- when to have the party
- what you may wish to bring
- the family or special persons to invite.

**Note:** If you choose to bring food, please bring enough to share for the classroom. Foods brought for sharing must be commercially prepared and have an ingredient list (for allergy or special dietary purposes).

### **What should I talk about with my child's teacher?**

Changes you notice in your child:

- not eating favorite foods

- restless night's sleep
- cutting teeth
- fussier than usual
- any other changes you may see

Things that may affect your child:

- family squabbles
- a new baby on the way
- a change in your home, school, or work schedule
- someone moving into or out of the household

### **Can I talk to my child's teacher every day?**

You may speak to your child's teacher **every day** about these things or anything else you think is important for the care of your child:

- questions you have
- suggestions you have
- what you see your child learning
- any changes or events that may affect your child.

You can also look in your child's cubby, read notes, newsletters and bulletin boards.

### **What are home visits and conferences?**

Families are asked to participate in two home visits and two parent conferences each year. A home visit consists of teachers visiting your home to get to know you and your child better. A parent conference is a meeting at the center and is a time to share your child's strengths, your concerns, and complete paperwork as required. During home visits and conferences, you may bring up:

- questions you may have
- things that are bothering you
- concerns about raising children.

You are the expert on your child, and your voice must be heard in evaluating their development. Teachers also want your feedback on planning curriculum, classroom environments, and other classroom and center activities. At parent conferences and home visits, teachers may share with you:

- questions they have about your child's development or behavior
- results of your child's ongoing assessment
- child and family goals

### **What if my family speaks a language other than English?**

TTU CEHS recognizes the value of being multilingual. Staff will make every effort to encourage your child to continue learning both your home language and English. Staff may ask for your support by sharing words, stories, customs, or songs. If you feel that a translator would be helpful for your communication with our program, TTU CEHS will arrange for translation services.

### **What if I have concerns?**

If you have a concern about your child's care, the policies of the program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, or any other aspect of TTU CEHS, you may talk to your child's teacher, home visitor, or the Family and Health Manager. That staff member will follow up with you within 15 days to ensure your concern was resolved.

If you feel like your concern was not resolved, you may talk to the Program Director by calling or scheduling a meeting. The Program Director will follow up with you within 15 days, to ensure your concern was resolved.

If you feel like your concern was not resolved, you may talk to the Executive Director, Dr. Stephanie Shine (806) 834-4664. The Executive Director will follow up with you within 15 days, to ensure your concern was resolved.

If you feel like your concern is still not resolved, you may address the Policy Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Write a brief description of your concern and give it to the appropriate TTU CEHS designee, so that your concern may be addressed on the agenda. After speaking with you about your concern, the Policy Council will make a final recommendation to the Executive Director, who will notify you of the final decision within 15 days of the meeting.

Parents are also able to review Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/child\\_care](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care), and a printed copy is available in the Director's office. The most current licensing inspection is posted on the licensing board in the front hallway. Parents can also contact the local licensing office by calling (806) 698-5510 or (806) 354-5307.

### **When can my family or I visit the center?**

You are welcome to visit the center to see your child or their classroom at any time. You are welcome to include other family members, as long as they have been designated by you on the Authorization to Release. We ask that you take your child's schedule into consideration when planning your visit. For example, do not visit during nap time.

### **What are transitions?**

Transitions are changes in your child's enrollment, such as:

- moving from one classroom into another
- moving from Lubbock (the Education and Disabilities Manager can assist you in locating a program in your new area)
- moving from Early Head Start into another program **on or after your child turns 3.**

It is important for your child to have smooth transitions. You and the teacher will plan for the transition so that your child can be as comfortable as possible each step of the way. Your plan could include 1 or more of the following:

- looking at all the options available
- visiting the new classroom or different programs
- talking with the new teacher
- a home visit by the new teacher.

When it is time to begin planning your child's transition into another program, your child's teacher will schedule a Transition Meeting. The first Transition Meeting will happen **6 months** before your child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (at 30 months). These meetings will be used to help your family decide the next step for your child once it is time to leave CEHS.

## **Part 4 – What are the health and safety policies?**

### **Why have health and safety policies?**

Early Head Start believes in protecting and promoting the health and well-being of each child in the program. To do this, we follow the guidelines required by regulatory agencies and suggested by pediatric authorities.

### **What if my child has special health care needs?**

Early Head Start can make reasonable accommodations for any child with special health care needs or medication requirements, as long as being in the program is not a risk to anyone involved. You and your doctor will need to provide the clear and thorough instructions on how to care for your child.

### **Does my child need to have regular shots and well checks?**

**Before your child can begin in the center-based program,** you must provide CEHS with a completed Child Health Certification and a current shot record, showing all required immunizations for your child's age have been completed. It is your responsibility to bring these items to CEHS. Once your child is enrolled, it is also your responsibility to keep your child up-to-date on all required health checks and shots, and provide the documentation to CEHS. If your child is over the age of 6 months, they must have regular dental exams and an Oral Health Certification must be provided to CEHS. You may be asked to keep your child home if their immunizations are not current.

If your child is under-immunized due to a medical condition we will need this documented by your child's doctor. If your child is under-immunized due to personal beliefs, we will need to have an affidavit of Exemption from Immunization for Reasons of Conscience from the State of Texas. If a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the program, you will be asked to keep your child at home until it is determined safe for them to return.

### **Are employees required to have immunizations?**

It is the policy of TTU CEHS to maintain a health and immunization program that protects both the employee, as well as the children, from diseases that may be prevented through routine screening or vaccination. Employees of CEHS must have the following *before* working with children:

- TB skin test – upon employment and annually thereafter
- A physical exam – upon employment and every two years thereafter
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis) vaccine – upon employment and every 10 years thereafter.
- Flu vaccine – annually at appropriate time of year.

No employee will be allowed to be present in the center while exhibiting symptoms of any contagious disease. If a caregiver cannot receive the flu vaccination for medical reasons, they must provide documentation. Certain communicable diseases will require a doctor's release before the employee may return to work. A list of these is posted in the Family and Health Manager's office.

### **What does *well* mean?**

You are responsible for making sure your child comes to the center *well*:

- rested
- healthy
- able to participate comfortably in all activities, indoors and outdoors

On a daily basis your child's teacher will conduct a health check through conversation with you and by checking your child for signs of illness or injury and recording all observations. This will include a complete check of the child's body from head to toe.

### **What does *sick* mean?**

If your child shows any of these symptoms or conditions, they are *sick* and should **not** come to CEHS:

### **Today, at this time:**

- cough or earache, so that your child cannot go outdoors
- unusual rash or blisters on any part of the body
- unexpected heavy sweating
- swelling, redness, or throbbing pain in an injured part of the body
- wheezing, uncontrolled breathing, or convulsions

- persistent pain in the stomach (abdomen)
- any contagious illness or condition
- unusual behavior such as excessive fussiness, crying a lot, red or watery eyes, no appetite, no energy, or excessive sleepiness
- any other illness or symptom of an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in daily activities including outdoor play.

**In the past 24 hours:**

- vomiting (once or more)
- diarrhea (two in an hour, or three or more during a day)
- a temperature of **101** degrees or more (**oral**) or
- a temperature of **100** degrees or more (**underarm**) or
- if showing changes in behavior or other signs or symptoms of an illness.

**Note:** If you are using medication such as Tylenol to reduce your child’s fever, but the child still has fever without medication, they **cannot** come to the center.

*We know that caring for a suddenly sick child can be hard for parents. CEHS staff can help support you in these situations by helping you locate a doctor, clinic, dentist, or other provider as needed.*

**How do I report it?**

**If your child is sick and will be absent 1 or more days**, contact the center immediately and give the following information:

- your name
- the name of your child
- the classroom your child is in
- the illness or type of disease
- when the illness started
- who made the diagnosis (parent, health care provider, lab report, etc.)
- the name of your health care provider, if needed
- how long your child will be absent.

If needed, the center will notify other parents and report the illness to the proper agency.

**What if my child gets sick while at the center?**

If your child becomes ill, CEHS staff will notify you immediately, and then will keep your child safe, secure, and separate from the other children until you arrive. For the health of your child as well as the health of other children, you must pick up your child **immediately** once you have been notified that your child is sick. (You will be allowed 30 minutes of travel time to pick up your child.) Please leave a current phone number with your child’s teacher daily.

Children will be required to go home if they vomit once, have diarrhea two or more times in an hour or three times during the day, have a temperature of 100 degrees or more (underarm), or if they show any other signs or symptoms of an illness.

**When can my child come back to the classroom?**

For a usual illness, your child is considered well and can return to the center when:

- free of fever without Tylenol or a similar medicine for 1 day (24 hours), **or**
- free of symptoms for 1 day (24 hours) **or**
- you have obtained a health care professional’s statement that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.



If your child has been absent due to illness, you **may be required** to bring a doctor's note to return. The Family and Health Manager will determine if a doctor's note is required. If your child has been absent with a diagnosed communicable disease, CEHS requires a doctor's note stating that your child is no longer contagious and can safely return to the center.

**Note:** Children with suspected impetigo, pink eye, ringworm, or chronic head lice must be seen by a doctor (not a pharmacy) for treatment. After the first 24 hours on medication, your child can return to the center with a note from your doctor that treatment has begun.

### **Can the teacher give my child medicine?**

*Only a teacher or full-time CEHS staff member can administer medicine to children.*

The teacher can give your child **prescription** medicine, **over-the-counter** medicine, and **as-needed** medicine, only when you:

- bring the medicine in its original, child-proof, labeled container
- follow the specific directions for each type of medicine
- sign the Medication Authorization form each day, or every month for an as-needed medicine
- talk with your child's teacher each day about:
  - when you gave your child medicine at home
  - how much medicine you gave your child at home
  - your child's reaction to the medicine
- medication will be stored in a locked container and out of the reach of children at all
- medication that must be readily accessible will also be out of reach of children at all times i.e. sunscreen, lotion, diaper cream, EpiPen
- medication that has expired or is no longer needed will be sent home for you to discard.

You should:

- give your child the first dose of medicine **at home**, so that you can see if your child has a reaction
- ask the pharmacy to use 2 bottles to fill the prescription, or get 2 bottles of the over-the-counter medicine (to leave 1 bottle at home and 1 bottle at the center)
- not bring medications to school that are only to be given twice a day or less.

For **all medications**, you will need:

- your child's first and last names on the container
- the directions from the doctor or manufacturer on how and when to give the medicine, including:
  - the amount of each dosage
  - the time for each dosage
  - the minimum time between doses
  - the maximum number of doses
  - how to store the medicine and how to dispose of the medicine.

For **over-the-counter and as-needed medicine**, you will also need:

- a doctor's note including:
  - the doctor's name
  - the child's name
  - name of the medication
  - symptoms that help determine when the medication is needed
  - updated doctor's authorization every 6 months.

**Note:** If the medication is for fever from teething, the diagnosis from the doctor must state this.

### **Will teachers put anything else on my child?**

CEHS does use sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper rash cream, baby bath soap and lotion, and will provide these for your child. You will be asked to sign a consent form when your child enrolls. Mineral-based, lotion sunscreen will not be used on babies younger than 6 months. Insect repellent will be used sparingly only on exposed skin in children older than 2 months. The repellent will not be put on children's hands because they often put them in their mouths.

### **What happens when other children in the center are sick?**

Early Head Start will notify you if your child is exposed to any contagious illness. You will be given the following information:

- the disease or condition to which the children have been exposed
- signs and symptoms of the disease or condition
- when the exposure occurred
- ways to prevent infection in your family.

CEHS has access to a Health Advisory Committee which provides information semi-annually about relevant health information. CEHS also obtains advice immediately when outbreaks of communicable diseases occur.

### **What about incidents and accidents?**

CEHS will notify you at pick up time if there is any minor incident or accident involving your child, or about anything that may affect your child's behavior and well-being. In the event of a serious injury or illness:

- 911 will be called immediately
- CEHS staff will contact you with information about the injury or illness
- if necessary, your child will be taken by ambulance to the hospital designated by you at enrollment.

### **What happens in severe weather?**

#### *Unpredictable Weather*

In the event of flooding, severe ice and snow, or other unpredictable weather, the CEHS Program Director will determine if CEHS will be closed or delayed. Please check your local television stations to see if the center will close for the day, open late, or close early.

#### *Tornadoes*

A weather radio is in the CEHS front office to alert the staff about changes in the weather. If there is a tornado warning, the children will be moved to the inner hall of the building and helped to feel safe and secure until they can return to their classrooms.

**Note:** Please do not attempt to drive to the center to take your child home. This could be even more dangerous for you and your child. If you wish, you may come for your child as soon as an all-clear bulletin has been announced over radio or television.

### **What if we need to evacuate the building?**

CEHS has an emergency preparedness plan which is posted in every room near the map of the building. If it is deemed necessary to evacuate the building, all children and adults will go to 800 Guava Avenue (Will Sedberry Park) and return to the center only when the building is declared safe.

### **What are other health and safety policies?**

#### *Child Abuse and Neglect*

As part of a community of people who care for young children, CEHS recognizes the importance of preventing and reporting child abuse. We are to report known or suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. The child abuse reporting hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

All CEHS staff members are required to participate in annual training on the recognition and prevention of child abuse. Families and other CEHS participants are also given opportunities to learn methods of preventing and recognizing child abuse. Families who have any concerns that their child may be a victim of abuse or neglect should immediately contact the CEHS Family and Health Manager for assistance.

#### *No Smoking*

For the health of children and adults, CEHS follows a no-smoking policy for all persons while on the property, walks, buggy rides, or at any CEHS-sponsored event regardless of location. Your Home Visitor appreciates when you have a "no-smoking policy" during home visits.

#### *Criminal History Restrictions*

All staff and volunteers who will have direct contact with children will have a criminal history and fingerprint check done before working in a classroom. Anyone found by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to be unsafe will not be allowed to work or volunteer at CEHS.

#### *Gang-Free Zone*

Under Texas law, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a Gang-Free Zone.

#### *Substance Abuse*

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of CEHS.

**IF CEHS STAFF SUSPECTS THAT A DESIGNATED PICK UP PERSON IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO NOTIFY AUTHORITIES.**

#### *Prohibited Items*

Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or any weapon, including a firearm, is prohibited at CEHS by staff, volunteers, or family members.

#### *Animals in the Center*

CEHS believes that children need opportunities to interact with animals. We frequently have fish or small animals such as rabbits in the classrooms. The teachers ensure that staff and children wash their hands after coming into contact with animals or items used by animals. Teachers supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior. Any children allergic to the animal will not be exposed. If needed, classroom pets have documentation from a veterinarian to show that the animals are fully immunized.

**Please do not bring personal pets to the center.**

#### *Insect and Rodent Control*

Each month the inside and playground of CEHS is treated with pesticides to control insects and rodents. The treatments are applied so that children will not come in contact with them. You will be given advance notice of these monthly treatments.

#### *Building Security and Access*

The TTU CEHS building is a secure facility; all exterior doors and gates are kept locked at all times. The South entrance is used by all families and visitors to enter the building, where you will be granted access by a CEHS staff member. Unfamiliar visitors will be directed to the front office to be identified and assisted with their needs. The classroom hallway has additional security that requires keypad entry. Only share this code with those who will regularly drop off or pick up your child.

**How will my child be disciplined?**

CEHS follows the discipline and guidance policy mandated by Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards. We will share this policy with you at enrollment. You will be asked to sign this policy at enrollment and every subsequent year.

CEHS staff use positive discipline in a safe, non-threatening environment. They set limits and encourage the beginnings of self-control. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated by staff or parents, while at CEHS or at program sponsored events.

**How do teachers handle children with challenging behavior?**

CEHS staff are trained to anticipate and take steps to prevent challenging behaviors in children. When a behavior occurs, staff respond in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and others in the classroom.

There are times when appropriate strategies have been tried and the problem continues. It is at these times that we might ask a child to sit quietly by themselves until that child can return to play. Children are always supervised during this time. We do not have a “time-out” place and this time is not seen as punishment; rather, it is a time for the child to regroup. Children will sit for no longer than 1 minute per year of age.

CEHS will not suspend or expel children from care due to chronic behavior issues. CEHS staff will take appropriate action, up to and including referrals for special services.

**What are positive strategies that teachers might use with my child?**

Teachers promote positive social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children
- modeling turn-taking, sharing, and other caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials
- helping children care for their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them comfort others who are sad or distressed
- describing and encouraging positive social behaviors when seen.

Teachers help children manage their behaviors by guiding and supporting them to:

- persist when frustrated
- play cooperatively with other children
- use language to communicate needs
- learn turn taking
- gain control of physical impulses
- express negative emotions in ways that do not harm themselves or others.

**May I wear shoes in the Infant Classrooms?**

In the infant classrooms, all adults and children must either remove their shoes or wear the provided shoe covers. This will prevent unwanted things like dirt and grass being tracked into the classroom where non-mobile infants might play on the floor.

**How will CEHS reduce the risk of SIDS?**

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), we have adopted policies from both our licensing and accrediting bodies.

- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep. A firm mattress and fitted sheet is provided for each child. If your child's doctor suggests they sleep in another position, CEHS must have a signed doctor's statement.
- No other items will be allowed in the crib such as pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals. Sleep sacks will be provided instead of blankets.
- The child's head and face will remain uncovered during sleep.
- Infants and toddlers are not swaddled at CEHS. If your child's doctor suggests your baby should be swaddled, you must provide CEHS with a signed doctor's statement.

## **Part 5 – How can you be a part of TTU Center for Early Head Start?**

### **Can I be on the Parent Committee?**

As a CEHS parent you are a member of the important Parent Committee. Please participate in parent engagement opportunities as they are provided. Since CEHS is family driven, come and share your ideas and ask questions. The Parent Committee is responsible for working with CEHS staff to engage all enrolled families, develop policies, nominate and elect the Policy Council members, and communicate suggestions to the Policy Council.

### **Can I be on the Policy Council?**

Policy Council members are elected by the Parent Committee annually at the beginning of the program year. The Policy Council is one of the decision-making groups in all Early Head Start programs. The Policy Council meets monthly to review mandated information, including: progress reports, monthly budgets, credit card expenditures, attendance and meal count reports, the financial audit, the annual Self-Assessment, the annual Community Assessment, communication and guidance from the Secretary and the annual Program Information Report.

### **How can men be involved at CEHS?**

CEHS believes it is critical for children to have positive male role models. We encourage dads and other father figures to be involved in their children's lives and education.

**We need you. TTU Center for Early Head Start is about children and families. We are here to support you as the most important influence in your child's life. And we need you to make our program complete!**

## **Part 6 – Extra Information for Home-Based Program**

### **Who is the program for?**

The CEHS Home-Based program is for pregnant women and families with children ages birth to 3 years of age, who live in the city of Lubbock and meet income and eligibility requirements.

### **Are there costs for parents?**

There are no fees for children and families to participate in the CEHS Home-Based program.

### **What are the Home Visits?**

The home visits are weekly meetings between your family and your Home Visitor. They are scheduled once a week for 1 ½ hours based on your family's schedule.

### **How do I get ready for a Home Visit?**

Your home visit is the time for you and your child to focus on each other, with support from your Home Visitor. It is important for you to help create a positive atmosphere for the home visit:

- be present for the whole time
- place pets in another room if needed
- turn off the TV, music, and phone
- ask friends to stop by at another time
- if other people are there, have them participate in the activities along with you
- focus on your child.

### **What happens at a home visit?**

The CEHS Home-Based program uses the *Partners For A Healthy Baby* curriculum. You will work with a Home Visitor to learn ways to help your child develop School Readiness skills by using materials found in your home. During each home visit, you and your child may have the opportunity for a variety of experiences, such as

- quiet and active play, both inside and outside
- exploring blocks, pretend play, art, discovery, simple problem-solving, games, music, cooking, stories and book sharing, neighborhood walks, and park play.

At each visit, you may be given information and resources to support you in your role as a parent, such as

- prenatal care
- child development information - follow up on school readiness activities that the family has worked on
- family life skills
- community resources
- assistance with social services
- nutritional, dental, health, and educational information.

### **Will my child be disciplined at the Home Visit?**

During a home visit, you are responsible for discipline, with support from your Home Visitor if requested. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated by a Home Visitor while on a home visit.

### **What can I talk about with my Home Visitor?**

A home visit is a time for you and your child to enjoy an activity together, with support from your Home Visitor and a time for you to talk about child development and parenting issues, or other topics as they affect your child.

### **Does my family need regular Home Visits?**

Your child needs the consistency of a home visit every week, and CEHS expects for your family to participate each time. Early Head Start regulations require that your child receives 46 visits per year.

### **What if I need to reschedule a Home Visit?**

Sometimes unexpected things happen and you may not be able to meet for your home visit. If you cannot keep a scheduled home visit for any reason, contact your Home Visitor immediately to reschedule.

### **How do I contact my Home Visitor?**

It is very important to be able to communicate with your Home Visitor. Your Home Visitor will provide you with contact information for themselves and the center. Also, consider providing your Home Visitor with multiple ways to contact you.

**What do I do when someone is sick?**

If you, your child, or any family member at home is showing any of the symptoms listed on page 14 in Health and Safety policies, contact your Home Visitor to discuss whether to reschedule the home visit.

If your Home Visitor comes for a visit and someone in your home has a contagious illness, your Home Visitor must leave and reschedule the visit.

**Missed Home Visits:**

If you develop a pattern of consistently missed home visits, your Home Visitor will discuss with you whether CEHS continues to meet your needs and expectations.

**Missed Home Visits with no contact:**

If your family has missed **2 home visits in a row with no contact**, a letter will be sent asking that you contact CEHS. If you do not make contact within 7 days, CEHS will drop your child from the program, and your child's spot will be filled. If you wish to be in the program again, you will need to re-apply and meet the eligibility requirements.

**What happens in severe weather?**

If there are unsafe weather conditions, your Home Visitor may not be able to come for the home visit. You will be contacted to reschedule the home visit.

**What are Socializations?**

Socializations give your child the opportunity to be with other young children in a group learning environment. Socializations also give you the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics and may be planned based on family input. They are scheduled weekly, either at the center or at other family-friendly locations. Siblings are welcome to attend but must remain with their parents.

While taking part in socializations, positive discipline is used in a safe, non-threatening environment. Limits are set and the beginnings of self-control are encouraged. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated, by staff or parents, while on CEHS property, or while participating in CEHS activities.

**Texas Tech University Center for Early Head Start  
Parent Acknowledgement Form**

I participated in an orientation to Texas Tech University Center for Early Head Start.

I acknowledge that I:

- have had the opportunity to listen to an explanation of the *Parent Handbook* policies and guidelines and ask questions,
- am aware of the permanent location of the CEHS *Parent Handbook*,
- have been given a tour of the facility,
- have been introduced to and visited with the teaching staff,
- understand the policy for arrival and late arrival, including the importance of regular arrival time,
- understand the policy for late pick up, including late fees charged per minute,
- have had an opportunity for myself and my child to visit the classroom to ensure we are comfortable,
- have had an explanation of Texas Rising Star Quality Certification,
- have been given information about applying for CCS funding, if applicable,
- have been given an overview of family support resources in the community,
- have been given information about child development and developmental milestones,
- understand that technology use on-site is limited,
- understand my role and influence in my child's development.

I understand the Parent Handbook policies and guidelines and I agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date